



LEADER GUIDE: EPISODE #11

HOW TO CARE FOR LGBTQ+ CHRISTIANS

AN INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH CHANGER:

It's time to rip the lid off your leadership and push past organizational pain points holding you and your church back. **Church Changer** is designed to equip church leaders with practical tools, proven strategies, and best practices to help you reach more people for Christ and shatter growth barriers in your ministry. Listen today, and put key takeaways into practice tomorrow! We're here to collaborate with you and cheerlead for you. Join Co-hosts Pastor Tim Lucas and Lauren Bercarich, along with special guests, as they outline a clear path forward so you can increase your impact, and let's have some fun in the process! New episodes drop the first Tuesday of each month.

EPISODE NOTES:

Overview

Talking with and about our LGBTQ+ friends can generate fear and anxiety for church leaders. It's a conversation that's deeply personal, highly emotional, and often confusing. How do you welcome people with open arms, showing grace, while remaining anchored in the truth of scripture? Art Pereira, Director of Community Care for Revoice, offers us a guide for loving the LGBTQ+ community.

About Art Pereira

Art Pereira is the Director of Community Care for [Revoice](https://revoice.us), a ministry that supports and encourages sexual minority Christians. During his work hours, Art spends much of his time providing care for LGBTQ+ Christians and helping local churches disciple and care for the LGBTQ+ community. With over a decade of experience in local church Youth Ministry, Art has a heart for discipleship, pastoral care, and the next generation of Christ's church. He values community, dignity, and beauty, and enjoys sharing life with the spiritual family God is building through and for him.

Something Free - Schedule A Call With Art Pereira

SCHEDULE A 30 MINUTE RESOURCING CONSULT: <https://calendly.com/revoice-art/30min>

EMAIL ART: art@revoice.us



Something Free - Recommended Resources From Art Pereira

WHAT: [Revoice's church partnership program](#)

FOR WHO: This is for churches looking to grow (churches looking to grow)

WHAT: ["Still Time To Care," by Greg Johnson](#) (book)

FOR WHO: For Pastors

WHAT: ["Guiding Families of LGBTQ+ Loved Ones: For Every Pastor And Parent And All Who Care"](#)
(book and extensive resources)

FOR WHO: For Parents of LGBTQ+

WHAT: ["Tenderness" by Eve Tushnet](#) (book)

FOR WHO: LGBTQ+ People

WHAT: [Revoice's YouTube Webinars](#)

FOR WHO: Anyone

WHAT: [Revoice's Digital Resource Library](#)

FOR WHO: Anyone

A Handful Of Key Takeaways From Our Time With Art Pereira

The truth is... this is really one of those episodes you just need to LISTEN to! You need to hear Art's story. You need to hear his heart. You need to hear how we can better care for our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters. That said, we'll try to bullet point a few powerful takeaways from the conversation to jog your memory as you review the content.

- Pastors - you can't be silent and not address the LGBTQ+ community and issues of sexuality. If you're a pastor and you're silent, you leave your sheep to figure things out for themselves. When you do that, your entire flock will develop their own beliefs based on whatever culture they're a part of. And, silence is really damaging to the LGBTQ+ community. You can't let the fear of blowback keep you silent.
- We tend to feel a sort of pity for gay people that choose celibacy because we buy the lie that you need sex and romance to have a full life. We don't see that anywhere in Scripture. That concept is super modern, super American, super Disney. Don't buy the Disney lie. You can be a celibate, gay Christian and have a full and beautiful life.
- We are called to be the spiritual family for our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters. God calls us to be living in community and deeply walking with those around us. We're bearing their burdens, carrying their struggles, and we also share in each other's victories. Spiritual family means assuming that you're my problem, but also my gift, and I get to carry those things with you. The new testament calls us into community.



- “Let’s get together and have a coffee” is not a helpful invitation for an LGBTQ+ person who wants to know what you believe at homosexuality. Oftentimes we dodge questions when someone asks via phone, email, social media in advance of visiting a church. A coffee is time-intensive and you’re asking someone to have a very personal conversation with you instead of simply answering the question, so an individual can make an educated decision as to whether they want to attend your church.
- Churches should be honest and upfront about what they believe. If you're accepting, but not affirming, be willing to say that. Don't make people guess about what you believe. So, how do you do that? Instead of creating a position paper that feels really cold and distant, if a church has an FAQ on their website, one of the things they can add is - "I'm a gay person, can I visit your church?" It's really kind to communicate to people your viewpoint and sexual ethics upfront. And share what my experience would be like at your church.
- God has good for the gay community, but the church isn't making that clear. To move forward, here are two clear next steps for churches: #1) Pastors, go get to know some gay people. Most pastors have no gay people in their life and that means they are ill equipped to care for those in their congregation. #2) Also, recognize the ways the gay community has been harmed by the church. As believers, when we see that gay folks feel isolated, when gay folks are attacked or harmed, we should acknowledge that we've been part of a culture that has been harmful to gay people. Historically the church has not loved its gay neighbors well, and that ownership means a lot. Just start with that acknowledgement.

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Continue the conversation! Here are questions to ask yourself and your team to help your church thrive. We hope Church Changer will inspire you to put into practice what we discuss each month!

1. We learn a startling statistic in the podcast: **A LGBTQ+ person who attends church is 50% more likely to commit suicide than a LGBTQ+ person who does not.** It's the only time in history that we see a link between church attendance and suicide. Where do you see unhealth in the church at large? Within your own church?

2. As a teenager, Art became convicted of a traditional sexual ethic, which is a belief that marriage is between one man and one woman and the only sex that is blessed is sex inside of that marital relationship. Our LGBTQ+ Christian brothers and sisters are therefore called to celibacy. Do you know anyone living this lifestyle? What are their biggest challenges?

3. The church is being called to serve as the “chosen family” for LGBTQ+ friends, those who might not otherwise have family and live in isolation. This also applies to singles, widows, and others. Is your church modeling this type of community? Are you personally extending your friendship to someone who needs community? What do you need to do differently?

4. How does your church lovingly communicate what your church believes about sexuality if your church is accepting but not affirming? Are you honest and clear about your beliefs? Or have you been accused by the LGBTQ+ community of “bait and switch?”



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5. How did Art's talk most challenge you? Where do you see God calling you to change: your thinking, your language, your outreach to the LGBTQ+ community?

We are rooting for you! May this be the year you shatter growth barriers in your ministry!

